

Message Text

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ACTION IO-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 AF-04 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SP-02

L-01 INR-05 RSC-01 /044 W
----- 107545

R 201500Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4337

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USUN NEW YORK 960

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 0075

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SF, UK, US, FR, WA

SUBJECT: PROPOSED DISCUSSIONS WITH FRANCE AND UK ON NAMIBIA

REF: PARIS 01384

1. SUMMARY: FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS, EMBASSY DOES NOT RPT NOT AGREE WITH FRENCH THAT TRIPARTITE DEMARCHE TO SAG ON NAMIBIA WOULD BE WISE AT THIS TIME. TO CONTRARY, DEMARCH ALONG LINES OF FRENCH PROPOSAL COULD, IN OUR JUDGMENT, BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. SOME FORM OF DEMARCHE WILL BE IN ORDER SOON, BUT WE FAVOR WAITING FOR A FEW WEEKS (THOUGH NO LONGER) BEFORE ANY DECISION IS MADE REGARDING REPRESENTATIONS TO SOUTH AFRICANS ON THE NAMIBIAN ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

2. FIRST, IT POSSIBLE THAT, WITH OVAMBO ELECTION NOW COMPLETED, MORE PROGRESS TOWARD MULTIRACIAL TALKS MIGHT TAKE PLACE RELATIVELY SOON. THERE HAVE BEEN HINTS, MOREOVER, THAT WHITE AUTHORITIES, WITH SAG'S BLESSING OR AT ITS INSISTENCE, WILL TAKE SOME STEPS SOON TO REDUCE PETTY APARTHEID AND/OR RELAX SOME ASPECTS OF INFLUX CONTROLS. NONE OF THIS MAY COME TO PASS, BUT WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE BETTER TO WAIT
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A SHORT WHILE TO SEE IF THERE ARE ANY IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

BEFORE MAKING DEMARCHE. DEMARCHE NOW MIGHT SIMPLY GET REPLY THAT STEPS ARE ABOUT TO BE TAKEN AND WE SHOULD AWAIT RESULTS.

3. ANOTHER ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF DEFERRING DEMARCHE IS THAT VORSTER AND COMPANY ARE PRESENTLY PREOCCUPIED WITH RHODESIA. IT NOW OBVIOUS SMITH AND ANC DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS OF EACH OTHER AND ARE MILES APART ON WHAT EACH VIEWS AS ACCEPTABLE TERMS FOR SETTLEMENT. BOTH KAUNDA AND VORSTER ARE GOING TO HAVE TO EXERT MORE PRESSURE ON RHODESIAN ANTAGONISTS IN ORDER BREAK CURRENT LOGJAM OF ANTIPATHY AND RECRIMINATION AND GET SMITH GOVT AND ANC MOVING AGAIN TOWARD SETTLEMENT. THUS, THIS SIMPLY NOT BEST OF TIMES FOR US TO HIT VORSTER ON NAMIBIA.

4. IF SAG DOES NOT MAKE SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE MOVES ON NAMIBIA BEFORE OAU MEETING IN SPRING, THEN INDEED WE SHOULD MAKE DEMARCHE. HOWEVER, IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT PRIME MINISTER VORSTER EPITOMIZES AFRIKANER STUBBORNESS. HE HAS, IN CONVERSATION WITH ASST SECY EASUM AND ON OTHER OCCASIONS, MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE VERY MUCH RESENTS ANYTHING WHICH HE CONSTRUES TO BE INTERFERENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA'S AFFAIRS. A DEMARCHE OF THE NATURE FRENCH HAVE PROPOSED MIGHT MAKE VORSTER ALL THE MORE REFRACTORY. WITH THIS IN MIND, WE BELIEVE INSISTENCE AT THIS TIME BY US, FRENCH AND BRITISH THAT HIS GOVT MAKE EXPLICIT STATEMENT NOW THAT IT INTENDS TO LEAD NAMIBIA TO EARLY SELF-DETERMINATION IN UNITY WOULD NOT PRODUCE ANY USEFUL RESULT AND MIGHT EVEN PROVOKE TESTY PUBLIC REASSERTION THAT SA WILL BROOK NO OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE IN SWA. FRENCH, AND PERHAPS WE TOO, MIGHT WIN SOME BROWNIE POINTS WITH AFRICANS, BUT THE PROBLEM OF NAMIBIA WOULD REMAIN UNIMPROVED AND THE POST-MAY 30 RECKONING IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL WOULD STIFF FACE US. (WE MIGHT NOTE, IN PASSING, THAT IF FRENCH REALLY WANT TO PUT PRESSURE ON SAG, THEY AS PRINCIPAL SUPPLIER OF ARMS TO SOUTH AFRICA, HAVE MUCH MORE LEVERAGE THAN WE OR BRITISH.)

5. INSTEAD OF TACTICS SUGGESTED BY FRENCH, WE WOULD FAVOR A MORE POSITIVE APPROACH WHEN TIME COMES FOR DEMARCHE. VORSTER'S FOREIGN POLICY APPARENTLY NOW PREDICATED ON COMING TO TERMS WITH AFRICAN STATES AND THROUGH THEM WINNING THE SUPPORT OF MAJOR WESTERN POWERS. THIS BEING THE CASE, WE COULD REMIND SOUTH AFRICA'S LEADERSHIP OF IMPORTANCE NAMIBIAN ISSUE IS TO CONFIDENTIAL

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AFRICANS, AND THAT REGARDLESS OF WHAT HAPPENS IN RHODESIA, SAG CANNOT PROCRASTINATE ANY LONGER AND MUST SHOW CONCLUSIVELY THAT IT MOVING NAMIBIA TOWARD INDEPENDENCE. WE WOULD NOTE THAT THEY SHOULD DO SOMETHING BEFORE OAU MEETING SO AS NOT TO WEAKEN POSITION OF KAUNDA AND OTHER MODERATES. WE COULD SUGGEST THAT THEY OPEN DISCUSSIONS WITH ZAMBIANA AND OTHER NEIGHBORING AFS ON NAMIBIA AND CONSIDER ASKING CERTAIN RESPECTED BLACK NAMIBIANS (E.G., CHIEF CLEMENS KAPUUNO) WHO ARE

WELL KNOWN OPPONENTS OF SA RULE TO JOIN IN TALKS IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE COMPLEXITY OF NAMIBIAN SITUATION--I.E., THAT PROBLEM IS NOT SIMPLY A QUESTION OF SAG VERSUS SWAPO. BY THIS TIME, WE COULD POINT OUT TO SAG, IT WOULD HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO HAVE READY MORE PRECISE FORMULATION OF ITS INTENTIONS RE THE TERRITORY.

6. WE BELIEVE THAT SUGGESTED DEMARCHE PUT FORTH BY FRENCH LIKELY TO FALL ON DEAF EARS UNLESS WE ARE WILLING TO BACK OUR WORDS WITH EXPRESSION OF INTENT TO DO SOMETHING INIMICAL TO SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERESTS IF SAG DOES NOT HEED WHAT WE SAY. SINCE WE DOUBT THAT WE, BRITISH, OR FRENCH WILLING GO THAT FAR, WE WOULD BE BETTER ADVISED TO WAIT A FEW WEEKS, SURVEY THE SCENE THEN, AND ACT ACCORDINGLY.

7. ONE OTHER POINT: FACTS DO NOT SUPPORT FRENCH VIEW THAT SWAPO CAN BE EQUATED WITH FRELIMO. FIRST, WHEREAS PORTUGUESE WILLING TO DEAL WITH FRELIMO, VORSTER ADAMANT THAT HE WILL REFUSE TO DEAL WITH SWAPO AS ONLY REPRESENTATIVE OF NAMIBIAN AFRICANS. SECOND, SWAPO'S GUERRILLA ACTIVITY VERY LIMITED COMPARED TO FRELIMO'S AND HAS BEEN GREATLY EXAGGERATED BY SWAPO REPS ABROAD. THIRD, ALTHOUGH NONE HAS BEEN AS EFFECTIVE AS SWAPO IN ORGANIZING NON-VILENT OPPOSITION INSIDE NAMIBIA, THERE ARE OTHER GROUPS EQUALLY DEDICATED TO ENDING SOUTH AFRICAN DOMINION IN TERRITORY, THEY HAVE BEEN ACTIVE AND VOCAL, AND SOME OF THEIR LEADERS HAVE SUFFERED PUNISHMENT AT HANDS OF AUTHORITIES (E.G., SWANU'S GERSON VEIL, WHO WAS IMPRISONED FOR FIVE YEARS). AND FOURTH, SWAPO'S INFLUENCE LIMITED ALMOST ENTIRELY TO OVAMBOS, WHILE OTHER GROUPS CONSTITUTE ALMOST HALF OF TOTAL AFRICAN POPULATION OF NAMIBIA. AND FINALLY, DAMARAS, HEREROS, AND OTHER GROUPS FEAR OVAMBO DOMINATION AND ARE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO ESTABLISHMENT OF A GOVERNMENT IN WHICH OVAMBOS WOULD PREDOMINATE. FOR THESE REASONS, CONFIDENTIAL

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WE BELIEVE USG SHOULD BE VERY CAUTIOUS ABOUT ADVOCATING THAT SAG SHOULD DEAL SOLELY WITH SWAPO, UNLESS AT SOME FUTURE DATE IT BECOMES CLEARLY IN OUR INTEREST TO DO SO. AS OF NOW IT IS NOT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INDEPENDENCE, DEMARCHE, POLICIES, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975CAPET00075
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750022-0720
From: CAPE TOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750138/aaaabhnn.tel
Line Count: 159
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 75 PARIS 01384
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 MAY 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <14 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROPOSED DISCUSSIONS WITH FRANCE AND UK ON NAMIBIA
TAGS: PFOR, SF, UK, US, FR, WA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006